

# 11 SCIENTISTS ASK DELAY IN H-SHOTS

## U.S. Urged to Permit Study of Explosion in Space

By WALTER SULLIVAN

Eleven scientists, including two former presidents of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, have written President Kennedy asking postponement of the projected hydrogen device explosions in space.

They urged that the project be deferred until it could be reviewed by the international panel recently set up by the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) of the International Council of Scientific Unions.

"The earth's environment," they said, "is not the domain for potentially disruptive experimentation by any single individual or even any single nation. No individual and no nation has the right to tamper with the vast balance of nature."

Their statement followed the disclosure by the New York Times on April 30 that some geophysicists expected the explosions to bring about long-term changes within the inner Van Allen radiation belt.

There have been vehement protests from Britain. However, Dr. James A. Van Allen of the State University of Iowa, for whom the belts are named, has hailed the experiments as a great potential source of scientific knowledge.

The protest statement attacked "self-certification" of such experiments by American scientists. It noted the recent formation by COSPAR of a Consultative Group on Potentially Harmful Effects of Space Experiments. There was no mention of the planned explosions in formulating the tasks of this group.

### Nobel Laureate A Signer

Among the signers of the letter was Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgi of Woods Hole, Mass., who has won the Nobel Prize in medicine. The two past heads of the A. A. A. S. were Dr. Kirtley F. Mather of Harvard University and Dr. Chauncey D. Leake of Ohio State University.

The others were: Dr. Edward U. Condon, former director of the National Bureau of Standards; Dr. Harlow Shapley, the Harvard astronomer; Dr. William C. Davidson, physicist of Haverford College; Dr. David L. Hill of Connecticut, and Dr. Herbert Jehle, engineer at George Washington University.

Also, Dr. M. Stanley Livingston, physicist of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Dr. Victor Paschakis, engineer at Columbia University, and Dr. Maurice B. Visscher, physiologist at the University of Minnesota.

The statement was made public last night by the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. It said in part that, although the United States might have military motives, "the stated scientific reasons did not automatically justify" the tests.

Three devices are to be exploded over Johnston Island, in the mid-Pacific. One is to be below the ionosphere and of less than megaton range. The ionosphere begins some fifty miles aloft. One, of megaton range, is to be just above the ionosphere, at roughly 200 miles elevation. The third, of less than a megaton, is to be higher—possibly about 500 miles up. The megaton is the explosive equivalent of 1,000,000 tons of TNT.